

November 19, 2024

The Honorable Jennifer McClellan
U.S. House of Representatives
2417 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Linda Sánchez
U.S. House of Representatives
2428 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives McClellan and Sánchez,

I am writing on behalf of Education Finance Council to endorse H.R. 8438, the *Accessible Campus Commuting and Expanded Student Savings (ACCESS) Act*. EFC supports your proposal to include transportation and parking costs as qualified education expenses under a 529 savings plan. This bill will provide important financial flexibility to students whose vehicle or public transportation expenditures might otherwise inhibit their ability to access postsecondary education.

Education Finance Council is the national trade association representing nonprofit and state-based higher education finance organizations. EFC members increase postsecondary education access, success, and affordability by providing a wide range of free resources and services to millions of students and families every year. EFC members are driven by a public purpose mission to support students as they seek to grow their skills and improve their lives.

Expanding the allowable uses of 529 funds reduces the financial burden of attending a postsecondary institution or an apprenticeship program. This would aid not only commuting students but also students living on campus. On average, full-time undergraduates living on-campus at public and private non-profit four-year institutions are still responsible for \$1,340 and \$1,150 in transportation-related expenses for 2024-2025, respectively.¹

In addition, the total cost of attending college continues to increase while freshman enrollment is simultaneously declining.² Providing students this prudent flexibility when higher education has never felt more expensive will help play a role in bolstering students' ability to access, afford, and complete their education pathway. Congress has a history of broadening defined allowable uses of funds, and this commonsense expansion would help students use these savings in the best way they see fit.

By passing the *ACCESS Act*, Congress can ensure students stay on track toward earning their postsecondary degree or credential by allowing them to use personal savings towards a plainly education-related purpose. This legislation will ease the financial burden for students pursuing a college degree or postsecondary credential at a critical time when

¹ [College Board Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid, 2024](#)

² [National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Updates on Higher Education Enrollment](#)

postsecondary enrollment is decreasing and prices are increasing. EFC proudly endorses this legislation, and we look forward to collaborating with you to advance public policies that empower student success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gail daMota". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gail" being the most prominent.

Gail daMota
President